

PRESS RELEASE

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Union Official Sentenced to Federal Prison for Embezzlement

Madison, Wisconsin – Michael Rice, DOB: 5/28/48, of Madison, Wisconsin, was sentenced yesterday by U.S. District Judge Barbara B. Crabb to six months in prison to be followed by six months of home confinement, three years of supervised release, and restitution for embezzling \$30,210.92 from Local 538 of the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW). On September 19, 2005, Rice pleaded guilty to the embezzlement charge and paid the full amount of restitution, \$30,210.92, prior to his sentencing.

The UFCW is an international union representing approximately 1.4 million workers in the United States and Canada in a wide range of fields including meatpacking and food processing. Local 538 of the UFCW is located in Madison, Wisconsin, and represents employees of Oscar Mayer in Madison, Wisconsin; Tyson Foods in Jefferson, Wisconsin; and Jones Dairy in Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin.

Between September 2000 and April 2004, Michael Rice embezzled \$30,210.92 from the local union by submitting false claims for expenses supposedly incurred by

attending meetings with the UFCW in Chicago, Illinois, as well as with Wisconsin Vision and the AFL-CIO, both in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, when no such meetings ever took place. Michael Rice was the President of Local 538 of the UFCW during the time period of the embezzlement, and he had been President of Local 538 since the late 1980s.

When sentencing Rice, Judge Crabb noted Rice's breach of trust and the fact that part of his embezzlement took place during the strike by the union at the Tyson plant in Jefferson, Wisconsin. She also suggested that Rice consider apologizing to the union members but did not order him to do so.

United States Attorney Stephen P. Sinnott praised the work of the Department of Labor in its investigation in this case and said, "Union members, employers, and the consumers of union products all benefit when the integrity of the union is protected."

The charge against Michael Rice was the result of an investigation conducted by the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Labor Management Standards. Prosecution of the case has been handled by Assistant U.S. Attorney Peter M. Jarosz.

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